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ABSTRACT

The object of this paper is to raise some questions about the relationship between personnel policies and policies for training administrative personnel in the educational part of the public service in developing nations. The paper first examines personnel policies in order to indicate some of the issues that are relevant to training policy. Three elements are examined--recruitment and selection, pay and incentives, and work arrangements. The paper then considers training policies with particular reference to the organization. One technical constraint is that ministries of education and other bodies concerned with the estimation of needs for training and the organization of the supply of it may not be in a position to organize a comprehensive strategy for training. (Author/IRT)

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PERSONNEL POLICY AND THE TRAINING OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND PLANNING PERSONNEL FOR EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
A. PERSONNEL POLICIES AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO TRAINING	2
i) Selection	2
ii) Pay and incentives	7
iii) Work arrangements	8
B. POLICIES FOR THE ORGANISATION OF TRAINING	8
CONCLUSION	11

INTRODUCTION

1. The object of this paper is to raise some questions about the relationship between policies in respect of personnel and policies of training for administrative personnel in the educational part of the public service. Those who write about training in public administration usually argue that if performance of public servants is reported upon in competence rather than characterial terms, if promotion is based upon a serious and agreed assessment by hierarchical superiors and if training is related to induction and promotion, training must of necessity lead to an increase in the efficiency of administration.(1) But this line of argument raises a number of questions:

(a) What is meant by efficiency? This is usually taken to be the ratio of useful work performed to energy expended and is a benefit accruing from the application of work study. The efficiency of administration and planning therefore means the performance of defined tasks measured in relation to the amount of work done to perform them. This means that efficiency can be taken as a global measurement of a unit's performance. It can also be taken as an indication of an individual's performance.

(b) What is meant by training? Does it mean instilling a set of beliefs and attitudes so that staff will look at an operational situation in a desired way, and the mastery of standard practices whereby staff learn what the desired way of doing things is? Or does it mean the development of character and mental powers?

In any case, to measure the contribution of training to efficiency, we require the assessments of three groups of actors:

(i) those who assess what they expect the trainees to learn before they send them to the training course, assuming they know what the training course offers;

(ii) those responsible for running training courses who assess what the trainees have learned;

(iii) those responsible for the trainees on their return from training courses who may find that the trainees can do the job better than they themselves can do it; does this ever happen and how do they assess efficiency if it does happen?

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(1) For example see Peter F. Drucker, The practice of management, Heinemann, London, 1969, pp. 316-318.

(c) What is meant by competence as regards promotion? Can competence be equated with efficiency in the sense mentioned above or do civil servants look for characterial traits such as punctuality, discipline and unquestioning defence of hierarchical authority rather than for creativity, analytical skill, organising ability and industry? Promotion may be an automatic matter based on seniority or it may be based on a serious assessment by superiors or it may be based on political factors. In any of these cases it is by no means certain that training will be a condition for promotion.

2. This paper will first examine personnel policies in order to indicate some of the issues which are relevant to training policy. Second, it will consider training policies with particular reference to organisation.

A. PERSONNEL POLICIES AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO TRAINING

3. In view of the great variety of administrative situations and structures that exist in educational systems in the different countries of the world, it is difficult to state any generally valid truths about personnel policy and training. Our aim will be more limited, namely, to identify some relevant policy problems, the training implications of which participants in the seminar may wish to discuss in the light of their own experience. We shall refer to the following elements of personnel policy:

(i) selection.
(ii) pay and incentives.
(iii) work arrangements.

(i) Selection

4. Policies involved in selection include recruitment, which is relevant to decisions about the balance between pre-service and in-service training, promotion which might or might not usefully be linked with training, and dismissal which might be seen as part of a policy of rewards and sanctions involved in creating a motivation towards performance in which further training might usefully fit. While it is frequently argued that it would be useful to discharge grossly incompetent educational administrators, it is difficult for education authorities to do so because competence may be equated with conformity, and performance may be considered to be of secondary importance. More importantly, dismissal is only one element in a policy which includes remunerations and other benefits.

5. As regards recruitment, it is necessary to look at the extent administrative staff in education are recruited from the teaching profession, from the public service or from outside it respectively, what the arrangements for recruitment are and what the career path within educational administration is likely to be. It is clear that each country does things in its own way and it is seldom useful to suggest that any given national model is superior to another.

6. If we divide up the administration of education into the various main responsibilities involved, how are staff recruited and promoted to fulfil those responsibilities? This question involves looking at the demand and supply side respectively and trying to reach conclusions as to whether the attempt to match the two is working well or not.

7. If we look at the demand side first, we can identify three main types of administrative personnel in the field of education:

(a) those concerned with organising the improvement of the content and methods of education, including inspection, supervision of curriculum reform, teacher training, examinations, etc., in brief, those whose tasks require a superior understanding of the professional matters involved as well as authority based on practical experience.

(b) those concerned with ensuring that the laws and directives for the day-to-day running of the educational system are prepared and carried out, requiring knowledge of the educational system and of people, an ability to analyse a problem and reach a conclusion and organising ability.

(c) those concerned with specialist technical matters, accountants, statisticians, planning personnel, requiring a thorough professional grounding in their subject.

8. If we look at the supply side we are confronted with the essential question of what should be the career path of the different categories of administrative personnel and what are the limits of training in this connection. We can identify variations in the different countries of the following four main levels of recruitment:

(a) the lower echelons of the system of educational administration which are frequently staffed by personnel who possess teacher training certificates and teaching experience, perhaps also experience as heads of institutions, but may not possess academic degrees. Entry may be by competitive examination. If these persons do not possess a degree they may be debarred from being considered for promotion to the higher professional echelons. Is it to be assumed that a normal purpose of training is to help these persons obtain degrees, or is this regarded as undesirable so that these personnel should either remain permanently in a lower echelon or leave administration for other employment?

(b) the higher professional echelons of the educational administration may be staffed by personnel who possess university degrees, teaching and directing experience; entry by transfer from teaching institutions within the public system may be on the recommendation of such bodies as a staff selection board. Is the desirable career path of these persons an alternance between educational supervision in a professional sense and the direction of schools and colleges or should it include specific administrative duties? To what extent can teachers be good administrators?

(c) certain higher administrative echelons of the educational system may be staffed by members of a central corps of civil servants recruited through public examination. These persons can expect to move from education to other branches of government (or vice versa) in the course of their careers. A problem is to know what length of time may these 'central' administrators be expected to devote to educational and other branches of administration during their careers and what implications does this have for career development and training and for the efficiency of the work of administrative units?

(d) those who are appointed to posts without passing through a competitive selection structure because of personal or political influence which at least as far as high officials is concerned, is general and possibly desirable. If, as in some countries, the

number of administrative staff is greatly expanded in order that supporters of the party in power within the administration may replace their colleagues who supported the previous administration and if in addition, there is a great deal of political co-optation at the institutional level, any coherent recruitment and training policy becomes very difficult to operate.

9. These considerations lead us to conclude that it is necessary to undertake systematic study of the different sources and methods of recruitment of the various specified categories of personnel in order to understand in what respects recruitment and selection procedures could be improved, including arrangements and incentives which might change the character of supply.

10. This confrontation of the various components of demand with the institutional constraints of supply raises the question as to the ways by which improved recruitment procedures might broaden the supply, bringing new talents into the administration of education. In particular:

(a) To what extent does the constraint that recruitment to posts of organising the improvement of content and methods of education should be filled from the ranks of the school teaching profession preclude recruitment from the universities; is such recruitment precluded only for salary reasons?

(b) In cases where posts in educational administration are reserved for a 'mandarinate' group of peripatetic administrators selected by examination from special schools, is there advantage in extending this system of recruitment downwards or is it felt that educational administrators should be recruited from the teaching profession to an increased extent, or that administrators should be recruited to some extent from outside the public service?

(c) Specialist accountants and statisticians are normally recruited through the central recruiting arrangements of the civil service. Are there reasons why educational planning personnel should not also be recruited from sectors where planning techniques are well tested, such as the business sector or the economic/finance ministries of government?

Promotion

11. If we consider the constraints affecting promotion policy in the educational administration, we can distinguish between major promotions from one hierarchical group to another, less major but important promotions from one grade within a group to another and the accordance of 'steps' within a given grade. Major promotions from one hierarchical group to another would seem to be determined largely by educational credentials, in those cases where political patronage is not the decisive factor and where educational credentials may play a smaller role. In cases of promotion from the professional to the directorial group, however, political factors generally may be expected to play an important role. It may be asked to what extent education, acquired through study leave or part-time study should be important with regard to major promotion within the administration as compared with training?

12. We may ask why, except in the case of specific technological qualifications, promotion policy in the business sector of the economy tends in many countries to put less weight on educational credentials as an absolute condition for major promotion in management. One reason may be that profitability of business operation requires that important and efficient performance as measured in a number of ways including assessments, in relevant terms, made by supervisors can be expected in many, if not all, business situations to be the main factor in deciding promotion.

13. As regards promotion from grade to grade within a hierarchical classification group, there is a general reluctance in some educational administrations to accept non-academic certificates of training and performance assessments as a basis for promotion. Seniority, a record unblemished by non-conformity and evidence of 'togetherness' with the right people at the appropriate times may count for more.

(ii) Pay and incentives

14. It may be useful to consider the extent to which individual pay structures in fact put a premium on assessed performance and what degree of flexibility exists in the payments system to encourage and reward outstanding ability and performance. In some countries, e.g. French-speaking African countries, increased pay is conditional upon a report by a hierarchical superior or an inspector, and a negative report may retard an increase considerably or indefinitely. In some other countries, for example, Venezuela, pay increases are automatic every four years, and not related to performance.

15. Policy in relation to financial incentives to undertake training also varies considerably according to whether national authorities consider that training for a new post is important or not. In many countries, promotion, for example, from teacher to Head, from Head to District Inspector and from District Inspector to Regional Inspector, is in no way conditional on training and training facilities are rare, whereas in other countries, it is conditional and it is believed that training is of use in improving work performance.

16. Incentives may also be seen from the standpoint of the trainee. If the gap between returns from an academic qualification and a series of in-service, non-academic certificates, is large, civil servants will not be attracted by the latter kind of learning. They may also be attracted by alternative employment and much attention should be given to the data on attrition from educational administration to other public services or other occupations. If the policy is to match successful participation in training courses with pay increases, and this policy has been included in the relevant administrative texts, civil servants will probably be more enthusiastic participants. The important question must also be asked whether, objectively, academic success or course participation are in themselves sufficient to justify promotion and pay increases or whether some further evidence based on subsequent performance is in principle desirable?

17. In certain countries, retirement with pension is possible as from an early age, say 45. Is this on balance a good or a bad thing from the standpoint of career development and efficiency of the administration?

(iii) Work arrangements

18. If we are considering training in relation to performance, we may wish to ask whether work arrangements, including supervision, are such as to consolidate and maximize the benefits of training in practical terms or whether work arrangements have little relevance to the improvement in approach to problems and in techniques which are the subject of training. The Director of Education who invites a promising young administrator to sit in his office with him, and watch what work he does, is certainly attempting to communicate with a young colleague and help train him. But are we sure that the Director himself still understands the new problems of administration which have arisen since he received his training? If he does not understand the new problems, what kind of training can he provide? This example can be extended to other grades of the hierarchy in that work arrangements may or may not include regular communication and staff training within the hierarchy. There is an important training element in on-the-job communication, but it is necessary to study carefully the 'messages' which are exchanged in the process.

19. Policy in relation to work arrangements should also provide an answer to the question of how much training is compatible with the work obligations of individuals and institutions. Training has costs in individual and organisational terms. Professor Jamin in his research at the Moscow Pedagogical Institute has shown that the costs in terms of illness, absenteeism, special vacations, allowances, inconvenience, etc., in respect of part-time study for academic qualifications are higher than are generally believed. The problem is therefore to give priority to those types of in-service training which bring the greatest benefits in terms of operational efficiency, at the lowest cost to the ongoing functions of the organization.

20. In this connection, it is interesting to ask whether the respective trade unions or professional associations are involved in the arrangements made for training and what their attitudes to in-service training are. It is suggested that where Ministries of Education have close contacts with the trade unions, this might result in the unions making a positive contribution to policies relating to training, and to training programmes themselves.

B. POLICIES FOR THE ORGANISATION OF TRAINING

21. What would a normative organisational model for training look like? Ideally, the body responsible for training would possess the records, possibly computerized, on every administrative staff member, including qualifications, courses attended, performance reports and individual training

needs during a career. Ideally this body would liaise systematically with each of the divisions of the Ministry and with those units responsible for training at the sub-national level, so that a systematic idea may be built up as to what the priorities for an aggregate training effort should be. At the same time, liaison would take place with other parts of the public service so as to benefit from ideas adopted in sub-systems of the administration outside education. The aggregate training 'shopping list' would be reconciled with supply possibilities as a result of discussions between the body responsible for training, national universities, insitute of administration, other bodies and representatives of multilateral and bilateral assistance agencies so that training could be based on a medium-term master plan.

22. The writer has not been able to find an example in a developing country of a systematic and comprehensive attempt made by a personnel division in a Ministry of Education or by an Establishments Directorate or Ministry to determine what training is needed and wanted. One problem may be that some senior officers in directorates, regions, etc., do not see the usefulness of training and/or are not consulted systematically about it. While the importance of planning and re-training of teachers is generally recognized and is undertaken, arrangements for the in-service training of Heads, inspectors, administrative officers, planning and supporting senior staff may be haphazard or non-existent. Senior administrators may argue that certain work cannot be undertaken because of a lack of trained personnel but may not be solving the problem through training. But it can also be asked in some cases whether if such personnel were available, the senior personnel willing to solve would know how to, and be able to, use them effectively.

23. Again, checking the normative model against reality, where would an aggregate plan for training be formulated and what are the relationships between such a body, the divisions of the Ministry, the regions, zones and districts of the educational system. If there is a training unit in the personnel division of the administrative directorate of the Ministry, it is likely to be a small one which may be unable to undertake the necessary liaison work with the relevant individuals in the various divisions and units involved. The same problem is likely to occur when a Ministry of Establishments is responsible for organising training for the civil service.

Are there examples of flexible arrangements of a less ambitious and non-aggregate character where the respective division heads, regional directors, etc., have the main responsibility for the planning and execution of in-service training programmes, in liaison with the personnel division? Is an aggregate approach to training needs possible and desirable? Is it the only approach? What role should institutions outside the administration (universities, private institutions etc.) play in the conception and execution of training?

24. It is also necessary to consider what specific terms of reference should be given by the Head of the Ministry to officers in order to guide them in the planning of training. The following are some of the policy issues:

(a) Senior administrative staff

How much induction training is desirable? If they need training in management techniques, especially personnel management, will intensive courses ranging from one week to six weeks be of any use unless the work situation to which they return is also assessed in the light of needs for improved management? Are long sabbatical courses for higher degrees or specialised study (one year or more) of any use in terms of subsequent performance or does it pay to 'parachute' a highly trained man from another ministry into the post?

(b) Planning and development personnel

(Head of planning division; finance officers, programme officers for primary, post-primary and teacher training, technical, out-of-school education, examinations, scholarships and foreign assistance, reform co-ordination).

The teaching of the technical know-how being straight-forward, to what extent should it be undertaken in intensive short courses held in the Ministry and national institutions respectively? How much discussion and learning about concepts of planning and basic social economic and political issues in development is desirable/essential for these personnel and where should it take place?

(c) Specialised personnel

(Statisticians, accountants, curriculum reform specialists, guidance and counsellors, heads of institutions).

Is the organisation of specialised courses a Ministry or a university function? How can Ministries best ensure that all those who should benefit from courses actually do so?

(d) Inspectors and local, zonal and regional administrative officers

Is it possible, on the basis of practical experience of teaching and a teacher-training qualification and specialised vacation and long courses, to produce an inspector who can provide the requisite help and leadership for teachers and Heads? What should be the structure in terms of management training for intensive courses for administrative officers?

(e) Clerks, typists, messengers and junior staff

Should training be limited to specialized courses to increase efficiency, orientation in work and objectives of the Ministry, etc. or should the Ministry encourage these staff to work their way to the top and, if so, how?

25. Looking at the 'supply' side of the normative model, we may ask what are the conditions for effective working co-operation between Ministry of Education and universities and institutes as regards in-service training of administrative personnel. What prevents representatives of universities and representatives of Ministries or regions sitting down together and discussing how the needs for administrative training can best be met?

26. As regards the multilateral and bilateral assistance agencies, is co-operation between them adequate to avoid waste or is informal machinery desirable so that the needs of the given country can be met more effectively? To some extent, this is a matter of liaison as between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Economic Development which normally has the task of negotiating with development assistance agencies. If national priorities have not been worked out, training needs and opportunities may be determined solely on the basis of who offers to supply what course. But in another sense, discussion between the representatives of agencies themselves on what training needs to be offered to the national authorities and how the task might be shared might also yield useful results.

CONCLUSION

27. The idea that training can make a positive contribution to efficiency is generally accepted, although systematic knowledge about its benefits for educational administrative personnel is somewhat scarce. But there are a number of constraints on the operation of personnel policies affecting training in the administration of public systems of education which require attention. These concern the system of recruiting, reporting on and promoting staff, organisation in relation to incentives for training and attitudes of senior

officers and staff towards training and use of trained people. There is also a technical constraint in the sense that Ministries of Education and other bodies concerned with the estimation of needs for training and the organisation of the supply of it may not be in a position to organise a comprehensive strategy for training and a number of steps can usefully be examined whereby they can estimate the needs for and plan the supply of training better.